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United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

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Supplement No. 35

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Letter of transmittal

[6 October 2011]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 65/13 of 30 November 2010.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2010 to 6 October 2011.

(*Signed*) Abdou Salam **Diallo**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I
Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly[1] were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,[2] the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee has consistently supported a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine. It welcomed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference that launched the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee has strongly supported the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee has continued to work towards creating conditions for the successful conduct of the negotiations on a permanent settlement allowing the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. The Committee has also promoted support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period has been characterized by the stagnation of the political process and a volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The status quo has been characterized unanimously by the international community as unsustainable and requiring urgent attention. Despite the global calls for a complete cessation, Israel has continued its illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, further exacerbating tensions and mistrust between the two sides. The critical humanitarian situation in

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/31/35).

[2] Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

the Gaza Strip was also exacerbated by the continued imposition by Israel of a severe blockade on the territory, which has obstructed the movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian access and the import of materials required for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza, and undermined economic recovery.

5. The Israeli-Palestinian peace talks relaunched in September 2010 under the mediation of the United States of America were stalled merely after a few rounds of meetings following Israel's refusal to renew its so-called moratorium on settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In the absence of credible negotiations owing to Israel's refusal to cease settlements activity and to commit to the long-standing terms of reference of the peace process, the Palestinian leadership turned to diplomatic initiatives to gain recognition as a State within the 1967 borders, on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, and efforts aimed at obtaining United Nations membership during the General Assembly in 2011 session, the date endorsed in August 2010 by the Quartet as the date for the achievement of a final peace settlement. On 23 September 2011, at the outset of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, submitted to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, an application for Palestine to become a State Member of the United Nations.

6. The situation in the Gaza Strip remained bleak, with high rates of poverty and unemployment. The continued blockade imposed by Israel forced 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza to suffer from an acute shortage of basic goods and services, medicine and medical equipment and even clean water. Reconstruction and rehabilitation have been seriously undermined by the blockade. Throughout the year, Israel continued to conduct air strikes and limited ground incursions in Gaza, resulting in Palestinian casualties, including many civilians. This was met with rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups into southern Israel, endangering the lives of the Israeli population.

7. Israeli military incursions into West Bank population centres also continued, involving the killing and injuring of Palestinians, including civilians. Hundreds of Palestinians were arrested during those operations, including children under the age of 18 years. Many unarmed civilians were subjected to the excessive use of force by the Israeli military during demonstrations against the occupation, resulting in many injuries. The expansion of illegal Israeli settlements continued in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with thousands of new units approved by the Israeli authorities. The construction of the separation wall continued in defiance of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion, resulting in further confiscation of Palestinian land and demolition of properties and further harming socio-economic conditions. The situation in Occupied East Jerusalem remained particularly alarming, with continued land confiscations, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian residents, and the transfer of more Israeli settlers into the City.

8. Heeding the calls of the Palestinian people for an end to the political division since June 2007, Palestinian factions concluded a much anticipated reconciliation agreement in April 2011, but its implementation has been pending.

9. Over the reporting period, the Palestinian Authority successfully advanced its State-building programme, with strong support from the international community, and its institutional readiness for Statehood has been endorsed by the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

10. The activities of the Committee and its Bureau in the reporting period focused on the need for respect for the relevant United Nations resolutions and the urgency of resuming negotiations between the parties in the interest of salvaging the two-State solution and advancing the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as civil society, and reached out to its partners worldwide using new communications media. The Committee reiterated its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be achieved only through ending the occupation that began in 1967, establishing a Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed solution to the Palestine refugees issue on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The first international meeting convened by the Committee in March 2011 focused on the urgency of addressing the plight of Palestinian political prisoners held by Israel. It was followed by a regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss the urgency of realizing a two-State solution. The annual assistance seminar organized by the Committee in May focused on the mobilization of continued support for the Palestinian State-building programme. At another international meeting held in Brussels in June, participants discussed the role of Europe in advancing Palestinian Statehood and achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Committee encouraged all stakeholders to support the role and activities of the United Nations and urged them to support the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

Chapter II
Mandate of the Committee

11. On 30 November 2010, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 65/13), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 65/14) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 65/15). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 65/16, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

Chapter III
Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

12. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

13. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Palestine.

14. At its 330th meeting, on 21 January 2011, the Committee re-elected Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal) as Chair, Pedro Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) and Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairs and Saviour F. Borg (Malta) as Rapporteur.

15. Also at the 330th meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2011 (see A/AC.183/2011/1).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

16. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Political developments

17. The Israeli-Palestinian talks that had been initiated by the United States of America on 2 September 2010 were stalled after Israel ended its 10-month so-called moratorium on settlement activity on 26 September. In the following months, intensive diplomatic efforts led by the United States and supported by the Quartet to create conditions conducive to the continuation of talks, including a renewal of the settlement freeze, were met by Israeli government approval of hundreds of new settlement units, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem. On 8 December, the United States efforts towards a settlement freeze were brought to a close.

18. In a Middle East policy speech on 19 May 2011, the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, laid out parameters on borders and security, stating that the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders were established for both States, and that the full and phased withdrawal of Israeli military forces should be coordinated with the assumption of Palestinian security responsibility in a sovereign, non-militarized State. On 20 May, the Quartet issued a statement expressing strong support for President Obama's vision. Subsequently, the Quartet was unable to translate that vision into clear parameters for the resumption of negotiations between the parties.

19. Meanwhile, the Palestinian leadership continued its efforts to gain international recognition as a State within the 1967 borders. A number of countries have recognized the State of Palestine during the reporting period. According to the Palestine Liberation Organization Negotiations Affairs Department, more than 127 States Members of the United Nations recognize Palestine to date. On 23 September 2011, during the general debate of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas submitted to the Secretary-General an application for Palestine to become a State Member of the United Nations. The Secretary-General immediately forwarded the application to the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Settlements

20. During the reporting period, Israel, the occupying Power, continued illegal settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported in August 2011 that the number of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, totalled 144, and the number of settlers in 2010 had been 518,974. During the reporting period, the following plans to construct new housing units were approved by Israel, the occupying Power: 158 in the "Ramot" settlement and 80 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" (14 October 2010); 800 in "Ariel" and more than 1,000 elsewhere in Jerusalem and the West Bank (8 November); 130 in "Gilo" and Beit Safafa (30 November); 625 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" in East Jerusalem (1 December); 24 in "Beit Orot" in East Jerusalem (14 December); 92 in "East Talpiot" and 32 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" (17 January 2011); 56 in "Ramot" in East Jerusalem (14 February); 14 in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud (2 March); 200 in "Modi'in Ilit", 100 in "Ariel", 40 in "Ma'ale Adumim" and 50 in "Gush Etzion" (13 March); 942 in "Gilo" in East

Jerusalem (4 April); 204 in the East Jerusalem settlement of French Hill (13 May); 1,550 in "Har Homa" and "Pisgat Ze'ev" in East Jerusalem (19 May); 294 in "Beitar Ilit" (22 May); 930 in "Har Homa" (4 August); 1,600 in "Ramat Shlomo" in East Jerusalem, 2,000 in "Givat Hamatos" and 700 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" (11 August); 277 in "Ariel" (15 August); 100 in "Beit Aryeh" (30 August); 1,100 in "Gilo" in East Jerusalem (27 September).

21. Also, Israeli authorities demolished the Shepherd Hotel in East Jerusalem on 9 January 2011 to build a complex of 20 luxury apartments for settlers. On 8 February, the Jerusalem Planning and Building Committee approved plans for the establishment of two new settlements in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem. On 4 April, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak approved master plans for the "Nofim", "Eshkolot", "Rotem" and "Hemdat" settlements. On 19 May, Israeli ministers inaugurated a new settlement "Ma'aleh Hazeitim" in East Jerusalem. Peace Now reported in early September that, during the 10 months since the end of the settlement moratorium (from October 2010 to July 2011), the construction of 2,598 new housing units had begun, 2,149 had been completed and at least 3,700 had been under construction. In the light of the particular acceleration of settlement expansion, on 18 February, over 120 Member States sponsored a Security Council draft resolution condemning those illegal and provocative Israeli policies and calling for their immediate and complete cessation. While 14 members of the Council voted for the resolution, it was not adopted owing to the negative vote of the United States of America.

Settler violence

22. Settler-related violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem continued to be a source of serious concern. During the reporting period, three Palestinians, including two children, were killed by Israeli settlers, and six Israeli settlers, including three children, were killed by Palestinians. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there were at least 333 incidents of settler violence resulting in Palestinian casualties or property damage in 2011, and at least 142 Palestinians were injured by settlers. During the same period, 28 settlers were injured by Palestinians (as of 4 October). Since the beginning of 2011, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded the death of one Palestinian boy and the injury of 21 Palestinians, including 14 children, hit by vehicles driven by Israeli settlers.

23. During the olive harvest season in 2010, attacks by Israeli settlers, including arson, the uprooting of thousands of olive trees belonging to Palestinians, vandalism and theft of agricultural equipment and crops were reported on an almost daily basis. On 22 October, Israeli settlers desecrated a Palestinian cemetery on the outskirts of the West Bank village of Kfar Kadum. Incidents of arson and vandalism of mosques in the West Bank by Israeli settlers also occurred during the reporting period. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 7,500 trees have been uprooted, burned or vandalized by Israeli settlers since the beginning of 2011. Palestinian civilians tended not to file complaints with the Israeli authorities as those complaints had almost never led to the prosecution of perpetrators. That tendency was reinforced by the hurdles facing those Palestinians who chose to do so, including the need to reach police stations located within Israeli settlements. When complaints were filed, investigations by Israel rarely succeeded. Approximately 90 per cent of the Israeli police investigations into such offences in

recent years ended in failure, as files were closed on the grounds of either a "lack of evidence" or "perpetrator unknown". In some cases, complaints were lost and never investigated. Of 97 complaints related to the vandalization of Palestinians' trees that occurred between 2005 and 2010, followed up by the Israeli human rights group Yesh Din, none had led to the filing of an indictment against suspects, including 72 cases closed on grounds of "perpetrator unknown".

Movement restrictions

24. As of August 2011, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documented a total of 522 obstacles (roadblocks, checkpoints, among others) to Palestinian movement within the West Bank, an increase of 4 per cent from the equivalent figure recorded in July 2010 (503). The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs observed almost no changes in the other components of the system of movement restrictions, including the wall, the permit and "prior coordination" regimes to access the "Seam Zone" or settlement areas, and the closure of areas for military training. Also, the average number of flying checkpoints reported per month had significantly increased from less than 350 in previous years (July 2007 to June 2010) to close to 500 over the last 12 months (June 2010 to July 2011).

Demolitions and displacements

25. The Israeli practice of demolishing Palestinian homes, basic infrastructure and sources of livelihoods continued to devastate Palestinian families and communities in East Jerusalem and Area C, 60 per cent of the West Bank controlled by Israel. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs observed a sharp increase in demolitions since the beginning of 2011: as of 4 October, 435 Palestinian-owned structures had been demolished, displacing 823 persons. The total number of displaced persons in the whole of 2010 was 594. The United Nations estimated that there were more than 3,000 demolition orders outstanding in Area C, including 18 issued to schools. Most demolitions targeted already vulnerable Bedouin and herding communities, leaving those communities facing a real danger of complete destruction.

26. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, of those living entirely in Area C, approximately 18,500 live in small, sedentary villages and 27,500 reside in Bedouin and other herding communities, many in remote areas. They live in very basic structures (e.g., tents and tin shelters), have limited access to services and have no service infrastructure (including water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure). Food insecurity among those communities is high, at 55 per cent, compared to the overall level of 22 per cent for the West Bank. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs observed worrying trends regarding the displacement of Palestinians in Area C. The single most common reason causing people to move stems from the restrictive planning regime applied by the occupying Power, which makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain permissions to build. In many cases, it is due to a combination of other factors, such as settler violence, movement restrictions, including the wall, reduced income, demolitions, or obstructed access to water, education and other services.

The wall

27. Israel continued the illegal construction of the wall in the West Bank, including in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July that, according to the most recently approved route, the wall's total length was approximately 708 km, more than twice the length of the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) between the West Bank and Israel. Approximately 61.8 per cent of the wall was complete, a further 8.2 per cent was under construction and 30 per cent was planned but not yet constructed. When completed, the majority of the route, approximately 85 per cent, would run inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rather than along the Green Line. The total area located between the wall and the Green Line amounted to 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and "no man's land". The inclusion of Israeli settlements, together with areas planned for their future expansion, constituted the major factor for the deviation of the wall's route from the Green Line. The area on the western, or "Israeli", side of the wall included over 85 per cent of the total settler population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, living in 71 of the 150 settlements.

Security

28. The security situation on the ground remained a cause of serious concern. The Palestinian Authority continued to work to provide security in areas under its authority and to meet its road map commitments to combat terrorist attacks. In November 2010, a sixth battalion of Palestinian national security forces completed its training in Jordan and was deployed in the West Bank, raising the number of newly trained security personnel in the West Bank to over 3,500. Palestinians have seen law and order return to the main cities, and Israelis have faced comparatively few acts of violence from the West Bank. Despite those efforts by the Palestinian Authority, Israeli occupying forces continued to conduct routine military raids and arrests throughout the West Bank. During the reporting period (as of 4 October), 11 Palestinians were killed and more than 1,300 injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including during clashes between demonstrators and Israeli forces. Israeli forces conducted more than 3,000 search-and-arrest operations during the reporting period.

29. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces killed 104 Palestinians and injured over 500 Palestinians during the reporting period (as of 4 October) in incidents involving air strikes and the enforcement of access restrictions near the border fence. Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to land (up to 1,500 metres from the border fence) and sea (beyond three nautical miles from the shore) continued to result in casualties and hinder the livelihoods of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza.

30. Israel reported in late August that more than 550 rockets had been fired from Gaza into southern Israel during the past 12 months. On 6 April, a mortar shell from Gaza hit a school bus in southern Israel and a 13-year-old Israeli boy later died of his wounds. In total, 2 Israeli civilians, including a child, were killed, and 23 others, including 4 children, and 3 foreign workers were injured by rocket fire from Gaza during the reporting period.

Gaza Strip

31. Israel continued to ignore its obligations under international law to provide protection to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July that among the 1.6 million population of Gaza, 38 per cent lived in poverty, 31 per cent of the workforce was unemployed, 47 per cent of youths were unemployed, 54 per cent were food insecure, and over 75 per cent were aid dependent. The economic output in 2010 was 20 per cent lower than in 2005, and 35 per cent of Gaza's farmland and 85 per cent of its fishing waters were totally or partially inaccessible owing to Israeli military measures.

32. Despite the Israeli claims of "easing restrictions", the Israeli blockade continues to severely restrict imports and exports, as well as the movement of people in and out of Gaza, and access to agricultural land and fishing waters. People in Gaza are unable to provide for their families, and the quality of infrastructure and vital services has continued to deteriorate, with a severely detrimental impact on the socio-economic conditions. As such, measures taken to ease the blockade in June 2010 have had little effect on the humanitarian situation. While imports have increased, they are still only at 45 per cent of the pre-2007 levels. Exports remain tightly restricted and are limited to some agricultural produce to Europe. Businesses cannot access their traditional markets of Israel and the West Bank. Thousands of people, some of them children, risk their lives smuggling goods through the tunnels under the border with Egypt. The tunnel industry in Gaza is a direct result of ongoing restrictions on the import of construction materials, the lack of employment opportunities and the huge reconstruction needs in Gaza. During the reporting period, at least 37 Palestinians were killed and at least 52 injured in tunnel-related incidents, including Israeli air strikes, tunnel collapses, electrocution and explosion of gas cylinders (as of 4 October).

Water

33. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July 2011 that 50 to 80 million litres of raw and partially treated sewage from the Gaza Strip were dumped in the sea each day, and over 90 per cent of the water from the Gaza aquifer was undrinkable. The already vulnerable water and sanitation infrastructure serving the Gaza Strip population was increasingly affected by Israeli attacks in recent months.

34. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported that Israeli settlers in the West Bank consumed water 7 times more than Palestinians. The amount of pure water available in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is estimated to be 2.4 billion cubic metres yearly, of which Israel utilizes about 90 per cent. This leads to scarcity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, forcing Palestinians to look for alternative resources, such as water purchased from an Israeli company. In 2010, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded the demolition by Israel of 27 water cisterns and other rainwater-collection systems in the West Bank, which serve marginalized rural and herder Palestinian communities where water is already scarce and where drought is an ever-present threat. The removal of such critical infrastructure places serious strains on the resilience and coping mechanisms of these communities, who will become increasingly dependent on economically unsustainable sources such as tankered water.

Women

35. The West Bank and Gaza Office of UN-Women welcomed the fact that the Palestinian Authority had set up, for the first time, a Cross-sectoral National Gender Strategy and had pledged gender responsive budgeting to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment. Yet, women were still the most underutilized resource for socio-economic development, with formal labour force participation at 15 per cent and a lack of diversification in women's employment — 61 per cent in services and 20 per cent in agriculture.

Children's right to education

36. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs observed a number of concerns related to the right to education for children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Continuing hostilities between the Israeli military and armed Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip have affected the students of both populations. In Gaza, seven schools were damaged as a result of Israeli air strikes. In southern Israel, two incidents of Palestinian rocket fire caused damage to school infrastructure. Classroom shortages are also the main challenge facing the education sector in the Gaza Strip. The ban on the import of building materials imposed by Israel is among the main reasons for the current shortage of classrooms. Approximately 80 per cent of government schools and 90 per cent of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools run double shifts. As a result, students often have to be accommodated in schools far from where they live, and classroom time has been reduced by almost one third. Even with double shifting, schools are overcrowded, with an average of 39 pupils in a class. Those difficulties have had a severe negative impact on learning outcomes. To address the classroom shortages for the next five years, it is estimated that 130 new government-run schools and 100 new UNRWA schools are needed.

37. Israeli military raids on school premises in the West Bank resulted in children being exposed to tear gas inhalation, frightened or injured by sound bombs, or arrested within their schools. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July that part of a school had been demolished in the Area C village of Kherbet Al Dkeika in Hebron this year, and that six schools in East Jerusalem and 18 in Area C were served demolition orders. In East Jerusalem, almost half of the classrooms attended by Palestinian students were considered to be "non-standard" in 2010. To partially address these difficulties, double shifting is common, and schools are often forced to hold classes in rented houses that do not meet basic educational and health standards. It is almost impossible for alternative schools to obtain Israeli-issued building permits, and sometimes they are forced to build without a permit, running the risk of receiving demolition orders and heavy fines.

Prisoners

38. The Palestine Liberation Organization Negotiations Affairs Department said in January 2011 that Israel held roughly 6,000 Palestinian and Arab political prisoners in its prisons and detention centres, including 225 children and 39 women. That also included 315 political prisoners that it had held since before the conclusion of the Oslo accords in 1993. On 12 February 2011, the Palestinian Authority Minister of Prisoners Affairs, Issa Qaraqi, said that Palestinian children in Israeli prisons were

"subjected to all forms of torture" and that in 2010 Israel had imprisoned 1,000 children and imposed house arrests and large fines on many minors. In a report published on 13 April, the Palestinian Authority Ministry for Prisoners Affairs said that Israel had arrested a total of 750,000 Palestinians since the start of the occupation in 1967. On 4 August, at the outset of the month of Ramadan, Israel released 200 Palestinian security prisoners that were close to completing their sentences.

Palestinian State-building programme

39. Despite the very difficult circumstances under occupation, the Palestinian Authority steadily advanced its State-building programme with strong support from the international community. In a report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting in April 2011, the World Bank reported that the Palestinian Authority had continued to strengthen its institutions, delivering public services and promoting reforms. It added that the quality of its public financial management had further improved. Education and health in the West Bank and Gaza were on the rise, comparing favourably to the performance of countries in the region as well as globally. Real economic growth in the West Bank and Gaza was estimated to have reached 9.3 per cent in 2010, exceeding the Palestinian Authority's budget projection of 8 per cent. Also in a report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) concluded that in six areas where the United Nations was most engaged, the Palestinian Authority's governmental functions were now sufficient for a functioning government of a State.

40. Meeting in Brussels on 13 April, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee recommended that the Palestinian Authority seek observer status in the World Trade Organization, and called on the Palestinian Authority to develop long-term strategies and advance trade-related institution-building. Also on 13 April, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton announced the signing of a deal that would open West Bank and Gaza markets to Europe, giving all agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products originating in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip duty free access to the European Union market.

41. In a report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting in September 2011, the World Bank stated that the onset of an acute fiscal crisis, accompanied by declining economic growth, might undermine the promise of those institution-building achievements. The economic growth had been unsustainable, driven primarily by donor aid rather than a rebounding private sector, which remained stifled by Israeli restrictions on access to natural resources and markets. Under those conditions, lower-than-expected aid flows in the first half of 2011 had had an immediate impact on the Palestinian economy. The shortfall in external financial support in the first half of 2011 had also contributed to the current fiscal crisis facing the Palestinian Authority. The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, also in a report to the September Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting, stated that the institutional achievements of the Palestinian State-building agenda were fundamentally constrained in realizing their full potential by the lack of an enabling political environment, and that the constraints on the existence and successful functioning of the institutions of a potential State of Palestine arose

primarily from the persistence of occupation, the unresolved issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Palestinian divide.

Reconciliation

42. On 27 April 2011, Fatah, Hamas and other Palestinian factions concluded a reconciliation agreement in Cairo under Egyptian auspices, and a signing ceremony was held on 4 May in Cairo. The agreement provides for the establishment of a transitional Government of technocrats that would prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections in a year and work for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. Implementation of the accord, however, has been stalled amid disputes over the composition and programme of a new government.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

43. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide extensive core services and emergency assistance to the Palestine refugees in its five fields of operations. The Israeli Government undertook measures to ease the movement of goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, but those measures still fell well short of the level required to meet the needs of the Palestinian civilian population and reconstruction requirements, or to ensure the revival of the economy. UNRWA continues to experience a grave financial crisis which threatens its ability to sustain or improve its services, to continue emergency assistance programmes, and to complete essential projects, such as the reconstruction of the Nahr El Bared Camp in Lebanon. The Committee reiterates its appreciation for the dedication of UNRWA to its mission and calls upon all donors to increase contributions to ensure the well-being of the population of 4.8 million registered refugees under the mandate of the Agency.

United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

44. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to respond to the development needs in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The UNDP/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, in support of the Palestinian Authority's National Development Plan 2011-2013, developed its strategy, entitled "Development for Freedom: Empowered Lives, a Resilient Nation 2011-2013", outlining the way the United Nations Development Programme/Programme intended to support Palestinians' aspiration for Statehood. The three-year plan will focus on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment of the most vulnerable and private sector investment, environment and management of natural resources, and public and social infrastructure for a viable State. Particular focus is on three geographic areas where the needs are the greatest owing to the lack of Palestinian Authority access — the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C.

45. The Committee also remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2011 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V
Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/13

46. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others.

1. Action taken in the Security Council

47. During the reporting period, the Security Council has continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

48. During the open debates at the Council meetings held on 19 January, 21 April, and 26 July 2011, the Chair of the Committee delivered statements (see S/PV.6470, S/PV.6520, S/PV.6590).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

49. On 14 January and 19 August 2011, the Bureau of the Committee issued statements on Israel's illegal settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 65/13 and 65/14

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

50. At its periodic meetings at Headquarters in New York, the Committee, among other things, heard presentations by representatives of UNRWA and the Association of International Development Agencies on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

51. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

52. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee, in 2011:

(a) The United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Vienna, 7 and 8 March;

(b) United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Montevideo, 29 and 30 March;

(c) United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Montevideo, 31 March;

(d) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Helsinki, 28 and 29 April;

(e) United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, Brussels, 28 and 29 June.

53. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

54. In Vienna, on the margins of the United Nations International Meeting, the Committee delegation held consultations with representatives of the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. It also met with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Deputy United Nations Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

55. During its stay in Montevideo, in connection with the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting, the delegation of the Committee was received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, Luis Almagro. The delegation also met with a group of parliamentarians led by the Chairpersons of the International Affairs Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives. On its way back from Montevideo to New York, the delegation was received in Buenos Aires by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Argentina, Alberto D'Alotto.

56. In Helsinki, on the sidelines of the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, the Committee delegation met with the Secretary-General and Chief of the Cabinet of the President of Finland, Päivi Kairamo-Hella, as well as with a number of Finnish parliamentarians and representatives of leading civil society organizations involved in conflict resolution efforts.

57. In Brussels, in the margin of the United Nations International Meeting, the Committee delegation met with the Deputy Director-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Michel Goffin; the Chairman of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council, Maghreb and Mashreq countries, Proinsias de Rossa, and other members of the European Parliament and their advisers at the European Parliament; the President of the European Economic and Social Committees, Staffan Nilsson; the Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the President of the European Parliament, Alexander Stutzmann; and the Head of the Middle East Division at the European External Action Service, Ilkka Uusitalo.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

58. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement

and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

4. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

59. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2010. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations and encouraged them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at realizing a two-State solution.

60. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. At the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, held in Montevideo in March, the deliberations focused on the ways of engaging the civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean for peace and reconciliation between the Israelis and the Palestinians. While in Brussels, in connection with the United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, the Committee delegation held consultations with 11 representatives of civil society organizations from Europe, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

61. During the reporting period, seven civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee.

62. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a page on civil society (http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm) on the "Question of Palestine" website as a tool for the exchange of information and networking and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee.

63. The Division maintained a Facebook page for information about developments related to the question of Palestine and the work of the Committee. The page has attracted some 700 additional "fans" during the reporting period, bringing the total to over 1,390. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

64. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. The international events held during 2011 were addressed by parliamentarians from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Israel, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as members of the European Parliament.

5. Research, monitoring and publications

65. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through the Internet:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletins and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

66. Pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the "Question of Palestine" website, which is located on the United Nations home page under "Peace and Security". That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL (http://unispal.un.org) on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations system and related documents. Documents in French were given French markers to facilitate the work of French-speaking researchers. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of UNISPAL, including by incorporating additional multimedia content and RSS and Twitter feeds intended to alert users about newly posted materials. The Division has continued to improve the redesigned "Question of Palestine" portal.

7. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

67. In accordance with the request of the General Assembly, the training programme conducted by the Division has been enhanced and involved four staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority. Two Palestinian Authority staff members participated in the New York training programme during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, where they familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and conducted research on specific topics. Two additional Palestinian Authority staff members participated in a three-week training programme at the United Nations Office at Geneva during the Trade and

Development Board session from 14 to 30 September 2011, where they familiarized themselves with the work of UNCTAD, including on trade facilitation and foreign direct investment. They also attended briefings on the work of other United Nations entities, including the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization.

8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

68. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters in New York, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna on 29 November 2010. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a photo exhibit entitled "Summer Games in Gaza" was presented by UNRWA under the auspices of the Committee, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information. The Committee also sponsored a cultural performance "The Gaza Monologues" by the Ashtar Theatre — Ramallah. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/15

69. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/15, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. In doing so, it strove to enhance dialogue and understanding, while sensitizing public opinion to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

70. During the reporting period, the Department used all of its information outlets and products to highlight the broadest possible range of developments and issues related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process. The online United Nations News Centre provided extensive coverage of the question of Palestine and the United Nations. The News Centre's English-language version alone published some 300 stories during the reporting period. The Department also produced a total of 144 press releases on the question of Palestine in English and French, including summaries of formal meetings and press conferences, as well as statements and press releases by the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials.

71. UN Radio, also available in all official languages of the United Nations, as well as in Swahili and Portuguese, provided regular coverage of issues and events connected to the question of Palestine. It paid particularly close attention to the plight of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and the work done on the ground by UNRWA and other United Nations entities. Coverage was also provided by UNTV through its live broadcasts and web streaming, as well as dissemination via the UNifeed satellite distribution system and UNTV's Channel 150 on Time Warner cable network. A feature story on female entrepreneurs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was distributed to hundreds of broadcasters worldwide as part of both UNTV's news magazine programme, *21st Century*, and the *UN in Action* series. UNTV also helped to distribute video content, including documentaries, produced by UNRWA. The Department also provided live webcast for over 56 hours of major discussions concerning the question of Palestine, including meetings in the Security Council and the General Assembly.

72. The Department arranged six briefings for 230 college and graduate-level students and responded to over 370 public inquiries on peace in the Middle East. The question of Palestine also continued to be a regular feature on the United Nations guided tour. Visitors were able to view the permanent exhibit on the topic, and tour guides and the audio tour recording provided additional information on the subject. The Department's Graphic Design Unit has worked on updating the permanent exhibit on Palestine, which is expected to be launched before the end of the year.

73. The Department's annual training programme for Palestinian media practitioners took place at United Nations Headquarters from 8 November to 10 December 2010. Nine mid-level Palestinian journalists working mainly in print media attended the programme, which also included visits to Geneva and Washington, D.C. The primary focus of the five-week session was strengthening the participants' capacity as print media professionals, including training with Internet-based media in the Arabic language.

74. The Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, organized the 2011 International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Budapest on 12 and 13 July. The Seminar, which brought together over 100 former and present policymakers from Israel and the Palestinian Authority, international media personalities, as well as members of academia and civil society, focused on the theme "Prospects for Peace: Understanding Current Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles". It took account of the dramatic changes in the political landscape in the Middle East and North Africa, including the increasing role of new media such as Twitter and Facebook in fostering political change. The Seminar was notable for its focus on the role of culture and the media in promoting understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. Eminent writers, cultural activists, musicians and political bloggers were among the panellists.

75. The network of United Nations information centres and services worldwide continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine. The information centres promoted the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and widely disseminated the message of the Secretary-General in official and non-official languages, including German, Kirundi, Portuguese and Turkish. Commemorative events, such as seminars, exhibits and film screenings, were organized in Dar es Salaam, Moscow, Manama and Pretoria.

Chapter VII
Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

76. The reporting period was characterized by a continued deadlock in the peace process that began 20 years ago with the Madrid Peace Conference. It was accompanied by further stagnation on the ground, while the broader region underwent dramatic and rapid changes. International efforts to create conditions to bring the parties back to the negotiating table have not been successful owing to Israel's refusal to commit to the internationally supported terms of reference of the Middle East peace process for the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions. The illegal Israeli settlement campaign accelerated, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the two-year programme of the Palestinian Authority laid the institutional foundations of a functional State. The Palestinian leadership embarked on a successful worldwide diplomatic campaign, with a growing number of countries recognizing the Palestinian State, upgrading its diplomatic representation, and signalling their support for its bid to seek United Nations membership.

77. The Committee remains frustrated by the current stalemate in the peace process. The agreed upon target date of September 2011 for the conclusion of a peace settlement passed without a breakthrough. The Committee emphasizes that the status quo is unsustainable. Maintaining negotiations without clear parameters and timeline provides only cover for expanding settlements and consolidating the occupation. The Committee calls for a resumption of credible negotiations towards the two-State solution on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the road map, and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee is implacably opposed to all settlement activities by Israel, which are inimical to the peace process and contravene international law, Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the road map. It was profoundly disappointed by the failure of the Security Council to uphold its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations in that regard. The continued engagement of the international community remains critical. The Committee welcomes the principles articulated by President Obama on 19 May 2011, and calls on the Quartet to translate them into comprehensive final status parameters so that Israeli-Palestinian negotiations can resume on that basis.

78. The Committee is encouraged by the success of the Palestinian State-building and reform programme, which it has consistently supported, and by the broadening international recognition of the State of Palestine. The Committee welcomes the intra-Palestinian agreement signed in Cairo as a step towards Palestinian unity and calls for its fulfilment. Further progress towards the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians requires a dismantlement of the Israeli occupation and its associated regime of settlements, checkpoints, the separation wall, demolitions, land confiscations and expulsions, which have been alarmingly intensifying, particularly in East Jerusalem and in Area C. The financial situation of the Palestinian Authority should be stabilized to enable it to sustain its State-building momentum. The Committee calls on donors to provide urgent and generous support, and looks forward to the early convening of a donors conference. The Committee

condemns any illegal and provocative seizure by Israel of the Palestinian Authority's revenues.

79. The Committee remains deeply concerned by the situation on the ground and the systematic violations of humanitarian and human rights law, which particularly affect the most vulnerable groups of Palestinian civilians — women, children and prisoners. The Committee is alarmed by the escalation of violence in and around Gaza, which threatens to end the relative calm that has prevailed in recent months. It reiterates its call for all attacks against all civilians to stop immediately and unconditionally, including rocket fire from Gaza and air strikes on populated areas i.. Gaza, settler violence and the shootings of unarmed protesters. The Gaza blockade should be immediately lifted by Israel, the occupying Power, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). The Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should act urgently and decisively to guarantee the protection of civilians in all situations and ensure accountability for violations of international law.

80. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the current challenges for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the continued involvement of parliamentarians and civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) the increased international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine as indicated by the growing number of documents and relevant information materials on the issue accessed by users worldwide on the websites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority carried out by the Division has proved its usefulness as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that that important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further enhanced.

81. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2012, implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the achievement of inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and to return to their homes and property. The programme will also focus on strengthening international support for the permanent status negotiations and contributing to the creation of a favourable international atmosphere for their conduct in good faith. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular the halt of all settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and an end to all other illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It will support

global campaigns to challenge Israeli impunity and promote the concept of Israeli accountability for its actions towards the Palestinian people.

82. The Committee will continue to pay special attention to highlighting the plight of the most disadvantaged Palestinians, such as the Palestine refugees, the Palestinians living in Gaza and Palestinian political prisoners. Taking into account the urgency of resolving the situation of thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and detention facilities, and as a follow-up to its 2010 International Meeting on that issue, the Committee will hold an international meeting at the United Nations Office at Geneva on that topic. Also, considering the central role of youth as the agents of change through non-violent, peaceful means, as recent events in the Arab world have shown, and the need for an increased involvement of the Palestinian youth in the shaping of their future State, the Committee will convene a meeting on the role of youth in the resolution of the question of Palestine, with the participation of youth political and community leaders and diplomats.

83. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for the Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to facilitate the viability of the Palestinian State. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution of all permanent status issues. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, provide a venue to have the narratives heard and reconciled and, with the help of civil society, to promote peace education. It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and their organizations in this process. The Committee also wishes to work towards Palestinian reconciliation and will strive to involve in its events Palestinians from different ends of the political spectrum.

84. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people and welcomes the growing calls from civil society groups for peaceful protests against the status quo. It lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, try to break the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee salutes the achievements of civil society which give hope to the Palestinian people. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. It will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with civil society and consult them on ways to enhance their contribution. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society.

85. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of the two-State solution and ensure respect for international law, in accordance with their international obligations.

86. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications

and other informational activities. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the "Question of Palestine" portal and use of new technologies and media, including web-based social information networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. The Division should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection by, among other things, continuing to digitize and upload historic documents and to develop user-friendly search features such as the French titles project. The Division should further develop the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority paying special attention to the programme's gender balance, and organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

87. **The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.**

88. **The Committee, at its meeting held on 30 September 2011, took note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations submitted by President Mahmoud Abbas on 23 September 2011 to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. The Committee calls upon the Security Council and the General Assembly to favourably consider Palestine's application for United Nations membership. The Committee also supports the appeal made by President Abbas before the General Assembly to the States that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to do so.**

89. **Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.**

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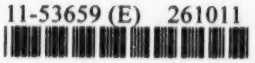

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